

Thin link between radicals, bomber

UW-O professor disputes comparisons between the
Unabomber, environmentalists

Sandy Mickelson of the Northwestern

Apr 11, 1996

A University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh professor of social and environmental ethics says there's little to link suspected Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski and radical environmental groups.

Bron Taylor has spent years closely studying radical environmental groups and says the Unabomber's "expressed affinity for anarchism and radical environmentalism" does not mean radical environmental groups such as Earth First! have sympathy for terrorist activities.

Taylor said claims are Taylor false that "the Unabomber represents the tip of the iceberg of widespread eco-terrorist cells that are planning to overturn industrial society through violence.

"There are small groups of environmental activists who are engaged in illegal campaigns to thwart environmental destruction, but if there were eco-terrorist cells operating out there, there would be a lot of evidence of them."

After five years of intensive field-based study, Taylor said he is convinced that "it is inaccurate to refer to these movements as 'terrorist' organizations. It is also dangerous to fan the flames of hatred against the activists involved in these movements through such fear-mongering claims."

He said there is some overlap between ideas of the Unabomber and those expressed by radical environmentalists, but unlike the wanton violence by the Unabomber, the fundamental premise of the radical environmental activists is that all life is sacred.

Religious perception, Taylor said, "provides a powerful restraint on violence, for, given this world view, humans and nonhumans alike participate in a sacral world."

Taylor edited and helped write "Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism," published last year by State University of New York Press.

He is currently working on a book on environmentalism in North America and has published several articles on the religion, politics and ethics of radical environmentalism.

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By **SANDY MICKELSON**
OF THE NORTHWESTERN

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